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Vol. X, No. 3, July, 1949, Part II

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These papers delivered at the meeting of the University Libraries Section of the Association of College and Reference Libraries at Atlantic City, June 17, 1948, have been copyrighted 1949 by the Association of College and Reference Libraries.

Introduction

THE PROGRAM and discussion on rare books in the university library which took place at the Atlantic City Conference were planned for two purposes. The first of these was to acquaint librarians with the thinking and experience of three men who knew a great deal about rare books and the problems of caring for them in university libraries. From their papers we hoped that university librarians would find useful suggestions and practical help for a local situation. The second purpose was less direct, but we hoped by these papers to give assurance to bookmen, collectors, and dealers, that university librarians were no longer vandals of the printed page and jailers of the book. For it is true that most university libraries now recognize the tremendous importance of rare books not only for purposes of scholarship but also for their other values and this recognition has led our libraries to provide proper personnel (e.g. Wyllie and Alden) and sound, bibliographical protection for rare books. By publishing these papers as a supplement to *College and Research Libraries*, we make them more readily available to bookmen as evidence not only of our intention but of our accomplishment.

Hidden in these papers is an assumption that needs a statement and an emphasis. University libraries are collectors, different in many respects, of course, from the private collector but often moved by the same impulse to buy and quite as often impoverished for the same reason. Some libraries, unfortunately, view the rare book on their doorstep with the uncertainty of an unwilling foster parent and in the forced guardianship of a gift can think of nothing better to do than to lock it up. But many more university libraries not only seek the gift but have a carefully matured plan for the purchase of rare books and special materials for the enrichment of their libraries and the scholarly programs of their institutions. A library with a plan operates in the same way as a private collector with a plan. Both read the catalogs and both are greatly dependent upon the services and good will of the dealer. Both aim for their own measure of completion in the fields of their collecting. Both find much for rejoicing in a prize acquisition, and there is much bitterness and self-reproach in losing an essential item. Whatever may be the motives for their collecting, they acknowledge a mutual obligation in seeking to preserve the materials of culture for the future.

The men who have written the articles that follow are bookmen who bring to librarianship the high standards that distinguish the true collector. Under the leadership of these men and their many colleagues in university libraries, we have every right to believe that the related causes of scholarship and collecting will be firmly maintained and strengthened.

ROBERT A. MILLER

The Need

JOHN COOK WYLLIE

I HAVE been asked to speak to you on the subject of the need for rare book rooms in the libraries of the universities of today. The question is simple enough: *Why a Rare Book Room?* And I do you the courtesy of supposing that you really want to hear the answer stated as well as I can state it from both your own point of view (if that happens to be different from mine) and as fully as I can from my own.

Just as a mathematician will sometimes stumble when you ask him why two minuses multiplied make a plus, just so I have trouble answering this basic question. How can I tell you if you don't know, I ask myself. The gap, of course, between the corporate A.L.A. member and the bibliophile is very wide, and I am not sure that I would know how to bridge it if I tried. If this were a general session of the A.L.A., you could imagine the situation somewhat more readily by picturing someone addressing the W.P.A. on the virtues of the Guggenheim or the Rockefeller Foundation, or by imagining a schoolmarm addressing the teamsters union on kindness to animals.

But since this is not a general session, I am inclined to dilate for a moment on the wideness of this gap between the A.L.A. member and the professional bibliophile. Let me, for example, name you some of the best known curators of rare books in this country: Clarence Brigham of the American Antiquarian Society, Zoltán Haraszti of the Boston Public, Bob Brown of the Clements, Curt Bühler of the Morgan, Gertrude Woodward of the Newberry, Giles Dawson of the Folger, Herman Mead of Huntington, Goff of the Library of Congress, Jackson of Harvard, and Emily Hall of Yale. Can you guess the percentage of A.L.A. members among these curators of some of America's most famous collections? Sure you can; it is zero. Not one of them belongs. And why should they? It has been ten years since the subject of rare books has appeared on an A.L.A. program, and then only because a joint session of the Bibliographical Society of America was being held. The great university libraries may appropriate a third or a half of their book funds to the purchase of rare books, but this percentage falls to an imperceptible fraction when it is diluted with the town and country libraries, the public and the sectarian, the high school and the grade school. If, therefore, it were necessary for me to address a general assembly of the A.L.A., I am afraid that the sum of my own feelings would be those of a missionary among headhunters, full of apprehension and low cunning, momentarily more concerned with saving my own head than in preserving the unregenerate souls of my listeners.

Since, however, this is the universities section, I think I may properly assume that our administrative problems fall into one general pattern, that the divergences between us come from differences in solutions, and that at least one can find the professionally trained librarian and the bibliophile as thoroughly mixed

in this group as they can be found anywhere in the world. This mixture that still exists today of the librarian and the bibliophile is unfortunately a dying phenomenon, largely I suppose because it is a hybrid which (by laws of accreditation rather than, as with other mulish hybrids, by the law of nature) is unable to reproduce its kind. We can console ourselves in the end only with the reflection that at least in some respects we have been superior to both the jackass and the jenny.

As the profession has dwindled into a trade, though, we see the bibliophile being replaced by the production shop manager, the scholar by the personnel officer, the student of bibliography by the engineer. It is to such diverse groups, all I am sure represented here, that I want to address my answer to the question of *Why a Rare Book Room*.

I forego the opportunity of answering the even more common question of what is a rare book, because it would require a separate essay to show why a rare book is not always rare and is sometimes not even a book. This fact annoys many people, especially those who are inclined to be annoyed when their Niger comes from Morocco or their Morocco comes from Algiers, or when they first learn that there is no ham in their hamburger.

I must assume either that you know what rare books are or that you will accept the inadequate thumbnail definition of them as the unexpendable parts of a library's collection: the 79 copies of the first folio of Shakespeare in Folger, the Gutenberg Bibles scattered in several of our collections, the association copies of sometimes common books, the broadside declarations of independence, and the proclamations of emancipation. The essential fact about each of these is that in the form in which it exists in the particular collection, it is unexpendable, even when there are 79 copies in one place.

One of the chief reasons for the need of rare book rooms in our university libraries today is the locust-like descent of great swarms of people on our collections. The locusts fall into two general categories: the student and the so-called trained librarian. Out of deference to the stated objectives of this association I pass over one of these categories lightly, but I will not forbear lamenting to this select group the wretched state of a profession, formerly one of dignity and character, which has so far fallen from the graces of the liberal arts and the natural sciences as to set up what can only be called trade schools. It is a dirty bird that fouls its own nest. You will forgive my bitterness if you have ever seen a class mark on a Ratcliffe binding, or if you have seen the Gaylord brand on a Zaehnsdorf inlay, or a punched page of an illuminated manuscript. Here surely are the marks of the beast.

The students are quite another problem, and here it is necessary for the librarian to protect one class of them from another. Remember that our students and scholars are increasing daily in number as the general level of our literacy rises higher and higher and as our colleges dig deeper and deeper into the secondary level of education. Take any book that you think every college student should read. Assume that each student will read this given book in the course of his four years; if you have a two weeks' charge system and average ten days per charge,

one book will handle 108 students if it doesn't wear out. A student body of 5,000 like ours at the University of Virginia will require 47 copies if the student may read it at any time in his undergraduate career, or 188 copies if he must read it in a given year, or 376 copies if he must read it in a given semester. Now there is no book in our collections of which there are 47 copies of a currently procurable edition. There are finely printed editions, or early editions, or association copies, let us say, of this book, and some of these must be protected from the all-devouring maw of the undergraduate, the object being not to keep them from someone, but to make them readily available to the people who need these very editions, as opposed to the currently procurable or the expendable ones. Here is another reason for a rare book room.

Most members of an academic faculty will follow me this far without demurrer, but I shift now to the level of so-called productive scholarship, and on the happy chance that some of you do not share the opinions of my friends and colleagues, the heads of our schools of history and philosophy, both distinguished men in their fields, I quote them on the subject of rare books. They say that a rare book is only a misfortune to them; that the function of a book is to be read and nothing more; that a book useful in research is needed, be it rare or otherwise (and preferably let it be otherwise); that they prefer Modern Library books to Aldines; that they do not care about having the manuscript of Rolfe's *Relation of Virginia*, since it has been published.

These attitudes can one by one be demolished from my own point of view, and I shall run you a sample or two in a moment. But the only acceptable answers to these statements from the point of view of the Professors of Philosophy and History themselves are these: (first) that showing a class of undergraduates an Aldine Lucretius or an original Hakluyt does something to a measurable percentage of them that arouses them from their intellectual inertia. It strikes the spark of interest that sometimes turns an indifferent student into a scholar. The Professors of History and Philosophy think that this is good, and worth an investment; (second, and vastly more important to them) that the existence at a university of a rare book room demonstrably attracts the gifts of specialized collections of research materials assembled by wealthy and generous patrons. The great collections go only where there are facilities for caring for them. The Professors of History and Philosophy, to put it figuratively, are willing to have some embroidery bought for the guest room when the guest is important.

You see, though, that I am talking from outside myself. These are the reasons for a rare book room that have meaning to the fellaheen. To me a rose can be good in its own right, quite aside from its attracting the bee which makes the honey which maintains the carbon cycle in the professors of philosophy and history. Perhaps I can show you why most easily by going back to their statement that a book is only for reading. I am not trying to persuade you to my own point of view now; rather simply telling you what it is. Remember that I am not talking about any book, but that loose thing called a rare book that I have carefully avoided defining. Most books, it is quite true, find their chief end in the noble function of being read, but the man who says that a book is only for

reading is to me a pervert of the same order and only of a different kind as a man who says that a woman is only for sleeping with. Of course there are a great many books that are good only for reading, and some that are not good even for that, just as I dare say there are all kinds of women, but there is something in seeing a Gutenberg Bible or a first folio of Shakespeare or a Grolier binding or a Kelmscott Chaucer that has nothing at all to do with reading a book.

The frequent tooting of the tin horn of productive research is nothing more than the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual degeneration. I know of no more depressing sight than what seems the hundreds of yards of our general stack devoted to shelving the products of the research of a single school of Columbia University. I select Columbia (of which incidentally I am an admirer) only because it has done better and more of it what we are all presumably trying. It has at least had the sense to show on a Euclidean scale that the thing is absurd.

I want to revert finally to the Rolfe manuscript which has recently been bought by a Manhattan bibliophile. I tried hard to get the State of Virginia to buy this on the grounds that as an historical document it was of the first importance. I was told that since it had already been published, its value to productive research was nil, or at best indirect, that it could not be purchased because it had value as a bibliographical show piece only. This is, of course, the same attitude that calls the original text of the Declaration of Independence or of the Magna Carta a bibliographical show piece. I can understand the attitude, but it never fails to shock and offend me. My defense against it, as I have already indicated to you, was to point out the very apparent fact that the exhibition pieces are the things that draw the gifts of materials for productive research. But I reiterate to you now my real opinion that this productive research is not really any great shakes. If the value of history lies in the monographs that we knock off to perpetuate our names and to demonstrate our learning, then I am wrong. History can teach me a few practical lessons (though I am not likely to heed them), but in the main and all the time, history's chief value to me lies in the sense of dignity and continuity it gives me personally. I am persuaded that most people other than productive scholars feel this way, that they find a comfortable non-mythological reality in the glimpses they get of the grandeur and the misery of their forbears—the kind of thing that makes me imagine that I am Captain John Smith when I cross on the Norfolk-Portsmouth ferry.

Seeing a first edition of John Smith's *General History* gives me this feeling. And to tell me that a Rolfe manuscript is of no importance because it has been published is the same kind of *non sequitur* as telling me that the manuscript is of no importance because yesterday was Thursday, or that a Gutenberg Bible is of no use because people won't read it.

I hope that the answer to the question of *Why a Rare Book Room* is implicit in these statements. There are plenty of appealing reasons for having rare book rooms that are to me wrong reasons, but I have tried to give them none the less, Jesuitical as this rehearsal may be. I suppose that the chief thing to remember in all this library business is the fact (as Gide puts it) that it is a rule of nature for the common to triumph over the exquisite.

Policy and Administration

LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL

TEN YEARS ago, when I was a brash junior on the staff of a western university library, I wrote two papers on the problems and uses of rare books in college and university libraries. It can be revealed now that these papers were the product of my own enthusiasm and other librarians' experience. I fearlessly sent questionnaires to such experts as Randolph Adams, William Jackson and Christopher Morley. All of this was done in the optimism of youth and served no immediate purpose other than to relieve my own spleen. For I was employed in a library which had no rare book room nor any plan to establish one. During this idealistic outburst I accumulated much information on what *not* to do, then filed my findings, and went back to "washing dishes" in the Order department.

Five years ago my idealism found outlet. One of the questions asked of candidates for the librarianship in a western university by the faculty committee appointed by the President of the University, was "If you become Librarian, what will you do about rare books and special collections?" Since then I have been endeavoring to put into action some of the answers which I made.

This paper will be a partial report on my experience in establishing the policy and administration of a department of special collections in a university library, as well as in directing an already founded and separate rare book library belonging to the same university. No questionnaires were devised. No review is offered of the extensive literature on the subject, most of which I have read at one time or another, and which is readily available. This paper is not for Randolph Adams and William Jackson, those good friends of mine in Ann Arbor and Cambridge, both of whom have admirably solved their rare book problems; but was written rather for university librarians who have not yet devised entirely effective policies and administrative practices governing the acquiring and servicing of rare books. Rather than universal answers and fixed rules, I shall offer some observations based upon personal experience on one campus, hoping that there will be some typical data of value.

My topic is the policy and administration of rare book collections in university libraries. This can be more simply stated as What to Get, How to Get It, and finally, How to Organize It for Use.

A policy for the collecting of rare materials should be determined by the teaching and research needs of the faculty and students, and by regional resources and cooperative plans in a given area.

We can dispose of teaching needs by the flat statement that rare books have small place in the undergraduate program. The very nature of rare books and manuscripts—their scarcity and their value—means that they cannot be subjected to steady and heavy use. The skillful employment of exhibits is probably the best way to acquaint the university undergraduate with the treasures of the rare book room. This problem of heavy use does not exist, of course, in the col-

lege where a rare book library, such as the Chapin at Williams, can be effectively and safely used to document teaching.

In a university research program, particularly in the humanities with their vast printed sources, the emphasis on collecting rare materials will be determined by the faculty's needs rather than *determine* the needs themselves. Every university library should formulate a code of acquisitions which will clearly state the collecting objectives of that library. This code should be the joint product of the library staff and the faculty library committee.

In the field of rare books the best policy is to build on strength, rather than to attempt to collect rare books in every area of university research. This practice of building on strength can be admirably observed at Michigan in the Clements Library, at Texas in the Wrenn, at California in the Bancroft, and at U.C.L.A. in the Clark. Indiana is likewise enriching its Defoe and Folklore collections, Illinois its Milton, and Washington the Pacific Northwest materials, in which they all boast unusual strength.

In larger universities, with their multitude of department and graduate school collections not always under a single administration, particular care should be taken to avoid the needless duplication of costly materials. This situation has been met at Northwestern through coordination by a Library Council. California with its eight separate campuses is likewise pooling its library resources through a statewide library council.

Regional as well as campus cooperation is essential if rare book collections are to attain maximum usefulness to scholars. In Southern California such cooperation is practiced between the Huntington and the Clark libraries. Because of the Huntington's immense strength in STC books the Clark seldom buys a rare book before 1640, and gives careful consideration to the purchase of any later book if it is already in the San Marino collection.

I want to pay tribute here to the work of Donald Wing in compiling his catalog of English books 1640-1700. At the Clark Library we order no books in this period without first determining their American location.

From emphasis on regional cooperation I shall proceed to an even larger concept and call for a national program of cooperation between rare book libraries. I suggest that we form a Council of libraries and collections which concern themselves exclusively with rare books. This would be composed of the Directors of such separate libraries as the Clements, the Houghton, the Morgan, the Folger, the Chapin, the Newberry, the Huntington, the Bancroft, and the Clark, as well as the curators and keepers of rare book collections at Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Stanford, Texas, and elsewhere. Matters of acquisitions, processing, servicing and maintenance could be profitably discussed at regular meetings, instead of waiting every ten years for a place on the ACRL agenda.

I come now to my second major point: How to Get Rare Books. There are two principal ways to do this, by purchase and by gift—and of the two, the latter is by far the most satisfying to the heart (and purse) of the librarian. Most of the great rare book libraries and collections in this country now in public hands

came thereto from philanthropic donors. The names of Brown, Clements, Folger, Huntington, Wrenn, Morgan, Chapin, Clark, Cushing, and others should be on the lips of every tender library school graduate. Although these men are dead, and their breed may well be tax-extinct, their collections live on as some of the greatest monuments to nineteenth century American Capitalism.

In succession to these benefactors we now have the mopping-up groups, known as the Friends of the Library. Two of the most successful of this kind of organization are those at Princeton and at the Huntington. University libraries interested in forming such groups should proceed with caution. Overhead expenses of printing, postage, and entertainment can more than match the value of gifts received, with the result that goodwill is the only entry to appear on the profit side of the ledger. If alumni and friends will underwrite all promotional expenses, there is still the cost of spark-plugging the group. In order to insure integrated planning with the rest of the university library program, this secretary should be a member of the library staff, preferably in the rare book division. A portion of his salary might thus be charged to the overhead of the friends group and supplied from sources outside the library's budget.

Whether or not a university library has such a friends group, it should not overlook the value to a rare book program of some sort of publication which will inform potential donors of what the library has and has not. An outstanding example of a publication sponsored by the library itself is the *Texas Library Chronicle*. At U.C.L.A. the head of the Acquisitions Department edits a mimeographed bulletin called *Acquisitive Notes*, which is aimed at telling the faculty what we have and telling friends what we haven't. Fifteen hundred copies are issued two or three times a year, at a mimeographing and mailing cost of about \$30 per issue. Results have been extraordinary.

We plan also at U.C.L.A. to use nicely printed leaflets to announce the acquisition of choice collections. The Olive Percival Collection of Children's Books was described in a two-color leaflet which also pointed out desiderata, with the result that nearly a dozen donations were received from collectors throughout the country. The University of California Library Council is currently planning a quarterly journal of acquisitions which will serve the interests of the statewide university libraries.

Rare book libraries and special collections perform a useful service to scholars and librarians by publishing reports of their acquisitions. Lawrence Wroth's accounts of the Carter Brown's annual growth are justly famous. William Jackson's acquisitions reports on the Houghton Library are the joy and despair of bookmen everywhere, so rich are they in so many periods and subjects. Rare book receipts are regularly reported in the library bulletins of Yale, Princeton, Texas, and Indiana, to name a few. The Morgan and the Clark libraries report at five and ten year intervals respectively on the growth of their collections.

Memorial funds honoring local collectors, professors, and bibliophiles can also be sponsored by university libraries to the mutual benefit of the family and the library. Such a memorial was founded last year by my library in memory of

Ernest Dawson, a local bookseller who was known throughout the world.

Smaller endowments should not be ignored. As James Babb has observed, Yale is still buying books on income from its first gift fund of £10 in 1763.

The purchase of rare books will obviously depend on the total funds available in a given library. Younger and smaller institutions and those depending upon state appropriations for their funds will need most of their money for "run of the mill" and "bread and butter" purchasing, whereas older and wealthier libraries will benefit from endowments intended wholly for the purchase of rare books on specific subjects. Acquisitions on microfilm and photostat make possible the quick enrichment of impecunious libraries, without the problems of protecting fragile and unique originals. For less than a thousand dollars any library can possess on photostat the entire Shakespeare holdings of the Huntington Library. Copies are *not* just as good as originals, no matter what the cynical professor says to the contrary. William Jackson's paper on "Some Limitations of Microphotography" should be at the side of all rare book librarians and handed out to those persons who profess contempt for originals.

I come now to the third and final section of my paper. We have considered what a library should get and how to get it. What then should be done with the rare book collection in the way of location and staff? A university's rare book library has the dual responsibility of serving and conserving. It must serve research, and at the same time it must conserve its irreplaceable riches. Familiar to all is the classic paper on this problem; I refer to Randolph Adams' "Librarians as Enemies of Books."

When a university library is bequeathed a rare book collection with a separate building to house it, located at a distance from the main library, numerous problems arise, such as have been encountered at U.C.L.A. in the administration of the Clark Library. The ideal situation is probably at Harvard where the Houghton Library is connected umbilically to the Widener. Most university libraries however find it necessary to house the rare book collection in the main library building. What is the ideal arrangement in this event?

Quarters should be large enough to provide space for the processing of materials, their housing, and their controlled use by the scholar. At U.C.L.A., where we had the opportunity to locate the rare book room in the best spot in the existing building, we put it at the rear of the wing on the second floor, in tandem with the Acquisitions department and the Librarian's office, and a short distance from the public catalog and loan desk. All of the Main Library's rare books, manuscripts, and archives will at first be housed within the suite of rare book rooms, but allowance is made for future expansion into a section of the adjoining main book stack. Air conditioning is essential. Our problem in the Southwest is of excessive dryness and dust rather than of cold and damp. Good lighting is absolutely essential. Restricted entrance and exit and a central service desk are necessary for protection against theft and careless use. The rare book room should provide each reader with a printed copy of its rules. Use of the collections should be regarded as a privilege; careless readers should be educated,

malicious ones ejected. Sound-proof typing cubicles should be present. Photocopying services should be nearby. At U.C.L.A. the photographic laboratory, which will be supervised by the head of the rare books department, is in the basement immediately below the rare book room.

So much for location. What about staff? The rare book room should be a separate department of the library, or in a younger place at least a division of the department of Special Collections which might also include maps, music, archives, manuscripts, and other non-book materials.

Who is to head these specialized activities?

If the library wishes to emphasize *acquisition* of rare materials rather than the *service* they will be put to, then it is not necessary that a library school graduate be employed. My belief is that the most effective rare book collection will endeavor to strike a nice balance between the getting and the using. If the collection is to be an integrated part of the library's service organization, then its head should be a person with some understanding of the aims of the other departments in the library. He should be trained in the history and techniques and ideals of librarianship, he should also have pursued graduate work to an M.A. or Ph.D. degree, he should have worked in other departments and other libraries, he should have an equal feeling for books and for people, and lastly he should have an abiding contempt for the rule of thumb.

The size of the staff will depend of course on the size of the collection and the numbers to be served. I recommend the part time employment of undergraduate and graduate students who have evidenced a respect and a love for rare materials. They make better attendants and clerks than business school graduates, and they can sometimes be recruited for librarianship to the improvement of the profession.

Suffice it to say here, that members of rare book staffs should be chosen because of their feeling for the materials, their training in librarianship, and their knowledge of subject fields with which they may be concerned. Personnel should be encouraged in bibliographical and subject investigations of their own making, that they may have a working knowledge of research materials and processes, and maintain an alert attitude toward books and people. However, they must not in time become research fellows but librarians, realizing that their primary professional interest lies in conservation and public service and in the library policies and processes contributing to these ends. Our library schools are notoriously deficient in the training offered for potential workers in rare book rooms and special collections.

To conclude, I think I am safe in saying that the cultural maturity of a library can be pretty well gauged by the policy it has and the administration it provides for rare books. Maturity does not automatically go with age. To be old is not necessarily to be wise. A library seeking to inaugurate or to improve a method for handling rare books will do well to look widely around the country, and then to put these observations together into an approximation of the ideal: Rare books deserve no less.

Organization and Service

JOHN ALDEN

IN SPEAKING on the problem of the organization of a university rare book room I am tempted to take as my text a statement I find in André Gide's *Pages de Journal*: "As soon as I do not differ, I keep silence." This is not to emphasize differences for the sake of differing, but is a recognition of the fact that there is little point to rehearsing those things upon which we all agree.

The questions on which I am to speak are closely related to the basic precepts discussed by Mr. Wyllie and Mr. Powell. Obviously the objectives of the organization of a rare book collection are but the activation of the philosophy and the purposes of such a collection.

My own "philosophy" of the rare book collection embodies in part an element of regret. I find it unfortunate that such a setup is necessary. The rare book collection places, in many ways, a false emphasis upon certain types of material, and distorts the general purposes of a university library when more or less arbitrarily chosen classes of books must be segregated for special treatment among traditionally lush surroundings. Would it not be better for all concerned if it were not necessary to have rare book collections at all? But the day when they will not be called for is not yet with us. It will require, progressively through the ranks of the library ladder, stack boys who respect books as physical objects, catalogers who can discriminate between the relative importance of cataloging details, reference assistants who see books as more than answers to readers' questions, and even library administrators who have the courage to make qualitative rather than quantitative comparisons.

I do not mean to imply, however, that the entire university library should be run like a rare book collection. But only by setting up a rare book collection have we so far found the means of facing the problems created by the need for the special treatment of rare books in the face of the leviathan which the great university library has become. The very bulk of a sizeable research library loosens and demoralizes its standards, and to offset this the university librarian has happily recognized—or been shamed into recognizing—his responsibility to certain types of books, namely, those books, "those treasures whose emotional and intellectual values are so high that they are difficult to compute," to use one definition of the phrase "rare books."

The establishing of techniques which minimize the personal element is apparently essential to the functioning of a huge institution, but the elimination of such personal elements, as far as a rare book collection is concerned, is a loss rather than an advantage. In the rare book collection a knowledge of techniques is far less significant than individual intelligence, and it is to preserve such factors that my own organization is designed. This is rather hard on the person concerned with supplying candidates for my staff positions, who finds it difficult to accept my insistence that I am more interested in intellectual potentialities

than in the technical equipment of my staff. On the other hand, I am prepared to accept the concomitant responsibility for their training and morale.

While in theory I do believe that the university library should be an integrated whole, my own experience—and I do not speak necessarily in terms of the University of Pennsylvania—has convinced me that the ideal organization of a rare book collection is that of a smaller library set up within the larger unit, a microcosm of its own. By such a means we can perhaps overcome the vices inherent to the large institution and reestablish certain values which have been lost in the burgeoning of our university libraries. This solution will shock the administrator who has succumbed to a faith in mass-production methods. But in practice such an organization of the rare book collection on a smaller scale can and does work. It neither implies nor requires an obliviousness to the over-all integration of the library as a whole. It simply reasserts the validity of certain objectives: those of personal responsibility, initiative, and interest. If it cannot work, then I am in favor of establishing the rare book collection in a separate building, with a completely independent administration.

Put into practice, such organization begins with the primary steps in the library machinery, the acquisition of books. Theoretically, the acquisitions department should have control over all orders, yet this is at the cost of incredible red tape, starting with the searching of titles where established routines necessitate the pursuit of predetermined steps, without reference to the specific problem at hand.

By initiating and handling its own orders for books, the rare book collection can make use of practices which, if carried out on a large scale, would bring forth chaos. Employed profitably by a smaller unit, they can be highly effective. Books sent on approval by dealers, for instance, can be examined before drawing up the inevitably complicated formal orders. More intimate and personal relationships between the rare book collection and dealers permit informalities intolerable to large organizations. Because one knows one's collections, or because, as a specialist, one knows the most expeditious means of verifying authors and titles, one can eliminate much of the time-consuming steps of searching. Once the book is in the library, and there is no question of its desirability, it can then be submitted to the acquisitions department for actual purchase, with the hope that there the book will not be submitted to an orgy of book stamps, perforations, or other marks of library ownership, before being returned to the rare book collection.

Similarly I am convinced that the cataloging of rare books should be done not by the general catalog department, but within the rare book collection. It is a basic tenet of mine that the catalog of a rare book collection is one of its most valuable assets. In the breakdown of American cataloging in our time, we must rescue the rare book from the fate of simplified cataloging. Within the narrower scope of a rare book collection there is some chance of maintaining certain standards and of achieving bibliographic cataloging. Here, too, we can provide those auxiliary data, imprint, or ownership catalogs which are increasingly useful to

the scholar, which fall outside the usual scope of garden-variety cataloging, and the provision of which complicates the work of the general cataloger.

My reasons for believing that rare book cataloging should be done within the collection are numerous. Not the least of them is that most catalogers do not like to catalog rare books. The fact that a book is "rare" too often throws them into a state of terror. They frequently either feel that they must spend as much time on it as possible, or else they resent the inroads working on it will make on their statistics.

Set up within the rare book collection, many positive advantages accrue to the cataloging of such books. Not the least of these is in terms of morale—and need I say that the mental health of catalogers is a major problem? Working as a part of a smaller unit, the cataloger is given a greater sense of importance, of accomplishment, and of responsibility. Here, too, a higher level of skill and a bibliographical point of view, which should direct rare book cataloging, can be fostered. Rare book cataloging can be thoroughly exciting, as I have discovered not only in myself but in my staff. Believing that some experience in actual cataloging is useful even for those not regularly engaged in it, I have eventually found it necessary to restrain members of my staff from doing cataloging at the expense of other duties.

And, so organized within the collection, rare book cataloging need not be disproportionately time-consuming or costly. In at least one rare book catalog department far more books, proportionately speaking, are much more fully cataloged than in the general catalog department of that university's library: the result of better morale, enthusiasm, competence, and discrimination. Nor does a separate catalog department necessitate a breakdown of coordination and uniformity. If the same forms of entry and of subject headings are employed, wide latitude in the actual contents of the catalog card can be tolerated.

Once the rare book has been processed, its care and service are again facilitated by the smaller scale of the rare book collection. One can know more fully its resources, and keep them in order and in condition. It is, however, conceivable that too much has been made of the rare book collection as a museum for books, with its aura of *noli me tangere*, but at the same time it is essential to a rare book collection that a decent respect for books as physical objects shall be taught, not merely to students but to the faculty as well. The scholar's distaste for the excesses of sentimentality and of fetishism exhibited by extreme bibliophiles is not always without foundation, yet even the scholar is on occasion equally unreasonable. We all know the type of faculty member for whom the text of a book is alone of importance, and who is blind to its other values. There is room for a companion piece to Randolph Adams' essay on librarians as enemies of books. An essay, in turn, on the scholar as an enemy of books would be well justified. I have even suggested to Mr. Adams that he should write it.

In the rare book room, then, one must educate the users of books in their proper care, starting with the undergraduate who shelves books for you. He will, unless he is exceptional, have to be taught not to pull books from the shelves

by the tops of their spine, ruining their backstrip, and not to force books onto crowded shelves to avoid shifting. Readers must be taught not to take notes writing on the surfaces of books, and so on.

Yet a formidable number of rules and regulations for their own sake is less important, I think, than constant supervision and close acquaintance with the users of the books. My one rule, that pencil rather than pen shall be used in taking notes, is, I suspect, less important in itself than in its psychological effect, implying as it does—or should—that rare books are to be used with special consideration. Likewise a personal knowledge of users and of use, more than rules and bars, will protect books from mutilation and even theft.

Basically, then, the formal organization of a rare book collection need not differ essentially from that of any small special collection. I am less interested in and less concerned with the formulas and routines which may be established than in the spirit in which the collection is administered. With proper personnel, with the desire to make it function, any technique will work, if its application is limited in scope. Thus it is not in the organization itself, but in its purpose and motivation that a rare book collection is distinctive.

That purpose, that motivation, is the result of the relation of the rare book collection to scholarly research within the university and the community.

In such a scheme I am afraid that the undergraduate generally plays a small part, unless he be the exceptional person with special interests, or actually doing original research of graduate caliber. Certainly the undergraduate who is concerned merely with reading an assigned text as such has little place in the rare book collection, though when the unusual undergraduate appears he should be given every encouragement.

It is, instead, for the graduate student and the faculty, within the compass of the university, that the rare book collection is principally designed. Here will be found the most productive area of service and education, and of the two I think that it is ordinarily the graduate student rather than the professor who will profit the more. This is, unfortunately, not necessarily for the reason that the full professor has already obtained full status as a competent scholar.

For the graduate student the so-called courses in bibliography—which are too often little more than elementary courses in reference tools—or in methods of research obviously do not meet all of the actual needs of the student. Here the curator of rare books can frequently supplement the work of the faculty by giving specific advice and direction, in terms of the resources of other libraries and collections, and in means of approach. I may be naïve, but I am amazed—although I am also gratified at being of service—at the number of graduate students with whom I find myself sitting down and working out research programs, showing them shortcuts, initiating them into the mysteries of photostats and microfilms, and the like. Nor do I think that this is needlessly pampering the graduate student who is being allowed to sink or swim by haphazard methods of research. The graduate school should certainly provide instruction in effectiveness rather than in trial and error.

In the field of rare books themselves there is in our generation a particular challenge and appeal. The rise of quasi-scientific bibliography to its present status has given to the rare book collection an importance which it has hitherto lacked. I shall not trace for you here the revolution in literary scholarship of the past forty or so years which has resulted from the work of men such as W. W. Greg and R. B. McKerrow. Suffice it to say that the bibliographical approach to books—that is, the study of them as physical objects—has undermined many previous beliefs, and opened up new areas and techniques of research. In the field of Elizabethan and Restoration literature, for example, the results have been tremendous. In its fullest and richest sense, bibliography has provided a new stimulus to literary and historical scholarship, similar to that provided two generations ago by philology. Unfortunately many faculty members still live in a philological world and are yet unaware of the implications of bibliography. I need but cite the members of an English department who knew nothing of Carter and Pollard's work on Mr. T. J. Wise's forgeries, despite its effect on their own field. There is also the distressing instance of the scholar preparing a variorum edition of Milton which, because of his ignorance of bibliographical principles and practices, has recently brought forth such criticism as to discredit thoroughly his inept if laborious efforts. Ultimately bibliography may prove as stultifying as philology, but in our day it offers magnificent potentialities.

In contemporary bibliographical research the library, and particularly the rare book collection, has thus become more than ever a laboratory, and here the curator of rare books and his staff are of primary importance. It is essential that the curator be, above all, a bibliographer. By this I mean much more than just being a member of the Bibliographical Society of America. He must know what has been done and what is being done in the field of bibliography and put his knowledge to the service of the scholar, especially since in this country there is little opportunity for obtaining sound bibliographic training in either classroom or seminar. At this point most bibliographers are self-made. It is to the rare book collection rather than to the faculty member, more often than not, that the student, faced with a bibliographical problem, must come for guidance, and the faculty member himself is likely to come to the rare book collection for assistance in a technique he frequently understands imperfectly.

Similarly the rare book collection is likely to become the focus for much of the bibliographical research and activity in the community, going beyond the scope of the university itself. The rare book room can readily and properly become the center and clearing house for much of the bibliographical work and research being done by book collectors and other individuals outside the university. By contacts with private collectors, moreover, the curator can also open up to competent scholars the resources of personal collections not ordinarily available for use.

It is thus not always possible, or even desirable, for the curator of rare books to confine himself to the limits of the library building or the rare book collection.

Gone is the day when the better mouse-trap would bring people beating a path. The demand for promotional activities in behalf of the rare book collection is a growing one. The library administrator has come to look upon the rare book collection as a means of attracting gifts and of obtaining publicity for the library as a whole. Such activities are valid as a function of the rare book collection, but only under the condition that all other basic needs of the collection have first been taken care of. Until the rare book collection is soundly organized and administered, its collections in shape and in order, and all such primary responsibilities met, it is dishonest for the curator of the collection to go out proclaiming his or the library's wares. If such conditions are met, and if the rare book collection has a sufficient staff, there is a tremendous amount which can be done in interpreting and utilizing the rare book collection.

It is in large part such promotion which in my mind makes the difference between a merely adequate rare book collection and a really distinguished one. It is possible to limit the staff of the collection to the minimum number of people required to provide routine service, but if it is to bring acclaim to the university, opportunity and freedom for extra-mural activities on the part of the rare book staff should be provided. I know of one rare book room in a university library run competently enough by a staff of two persons. But you scarcely ever hear of that collection, which is not without many fine books.

It is necessary to make clear to the community, both within and outside the university, what the real purposes of a rare book collection are. We in a university pay a high price for the vices of those whose interest in rare books lies in fine morocco bindings or in commercial values and in the gamble of modern first editions. The resources of a rare book collection have manifold and more widely acceptable forms of appeal: to the student of texts in the many fields of science, literature, philosophy, and history; to the student of the graphic arts, and so on. One of the more pleasant opportunities for interpreting a collection which I have had this past year was that of addressing a group of practicing printers on the subject of a group of Bibles. As an example of what can be found in books of interest beyond their texts, the Bibles did provide a chance to discuss the various problems and the history of their printing, far beyond the limits of their subject matter. Such lectures, such talks, do much to break down the illusions regarding rare book collections which, in the long run, do them much harm, although the appeal of exclusiveness does on many an occasion pay dividends, particularly in terms of the wealthy book-collector.

At the same time, a distinction should be drawn between the interpretation of a collection to the public, and the use of his position by a curator of rare books as a means of subsidizing personal and private research. There are, to be sure, certain libraries in this country which provide positions which amount to the subsidizing of research, but I have yet to see a university rare book collection with a sufficient staff to justify the expenditure of one's working hours to one's personal advantage. The problem of handling the administrative responsibilities of a rare book collection should be enough to occupy one's days, while keeping up

with current bibliographical and scholarly literature is more than enough for one's nights. Yet there are those of us for whom the urge to engage in research is sufficiently strong to make the problem of writing an academic one: how we find the time to do so I do not know. We just do, but it is a personal rather than a professional matter.

That the rôle of the curator should be that of a catalytic agent and stimulus to the publication of materials centering about the collection, rather than doing it himself, I think also follows. This is particularly true of manuscript materials, where I consider it distinctly unethical for the member of a library staff to seize upon them, editing them for his or her own personal advantage. Only in cases where one's own scholarly competence and knowledge fit one pre-eminently for the task, should one pre-empt such opportunities, rather than turning them over to a more proper person. The function of the librarian in a great university is primarily that of a custodian of the materials of research, an interpreter of their potentialities, and a stimulant to their use. The curator of rare books is performing an even more useful rôle in a university if he can get other people to carry out scholarly research than if he does it himself. To set such undertakings in motion is in fact often more difficult than the work itself, but if he is able to do it, he is contributing a great deal to the intellectual activity of the university, a very special type of service which is particularly and almost uniquely valuable.

If I have followed too literally André Gide's example in speaking largely in order to differ from more commonly accepted views, I have done so less from a sense of arrogance than from a belief that, since the rare book collection has grown up more as an expedient than as an objective, our previously accepted practices and tenets merit thorough re-examination. One of the principal dangers of the trend of the views which I have advanced, I will admit, is that the rare book collection may consider itself as the tail that wags the dog. It is necessary that a very fine balance be met between the rare book collection and the rest of the library. On the other hand, I think it rather healthy for each division of the library to consider itself of primary importance: only by such a confidence can each division fulfill its functions with the highest degree of effectiveness. Cooperation between units of a library is essential to effectiveness, though cooperation can also on occasion degenerate into a perfunctory observance of empty formulas and an interplay of personalities. Providing as much independence and responsibility within the unit itself as possible will in the long run accomplish as much for the library as a whole as for the division itself. The rather special problems of the rare book collection, in view of the materials handled, the type of service—bibliographical and otherwise—and the constant call for contacts with research workers and with collectors on their own levels, justify a high degree of independent organization, which will in turn greatly increase its prestige and stature. In such a fashion, I believe, will the rare book collection best serve its functions and achieve its widest scope in the research programs of the university and the community.

Rare Book Code

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The University Library
Los Angeles 24, California

Office of the Librarian

MEMORANDUM TO THE STAFF ON RARE BOOKS

The Library has a twofold purpose; to serve people, to conserve books. We are judged by the present on how well we serve from day to day. The future will judge us by how wisely we have conserved the research treasure which we inherited, increased, and willed to our successors.

An evidence of a Library's cultural maturity is the care given to its scarce and irreplaceable materials. Its workers must be able to recognize such books at any point on the belt line of acquiring, cataloging and shelving.

I am asking that every member of the staff share this responsibility of seeing that valuable books be given special handling. Normally the Acquisitions department screens them out of purchases, gifts, and exchanges for review, but the volume handled there is increasingly heavy, and fugitive items will sometimes escape through the finest mesh. Then it is up to the catalogers, and finally the loan and shelf people, to sequester these items which cannot be entrusted to the perils of the stack.

No rules-of-thumb can be devised which will take the place of personal knowledge, intelligence, and discrimination. Attached however is a list of preliminary criteria for recognizing possible rarities which is used by the Acquisitions department. All staff members are asked to study and be guided by it.

LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL

RARE BOOKS

Books and periodicals in the following categories may be considered for inclusion in the Rare Book collection and will be held in Acquisitions for review before accessioning. Inclusion in one of the classes is not tantamount to rarity, and the list is not necessarily definitive. The possibility of rarities outside these criteria must always be recognized. Books finally accepted as Rare will be so designated and given special handling (i.e. the legend will be pencilled lightly along the inner margin of the page following the title page; all ink stamping, perforating, etc., will be omitted; the call number, preceded by a triangle, will be pencilled inside the front cover and inked on a small label pasted to the lower right corner of the back cover; special care will be taken in plating, so that, for example, original bookplates are not removed or pasted over). Current Rare periodical issues will not be date-stamped, will be carefully marked with a pencilled triangle, and shelved with the Rare Books. All Rare materials will be given special care in binding, after consultation with the Head of Special Collections. Hand-binding or the use of boxes will be considered; covers, advertisements, etc., must be preserved intact.

This code applies also to Branch Libraries, for it is recognized that specialized Rare Book Collections exist and will develop in Branch Libraries, as in the history of chemistry and medicine. Branch Libraries will consult the Head of Special Collections on matters of housing, care, etc.

1. Books of value due to early imprint date.

a. All books printed before 1600.

b. American books printed before 1820.

In states west of the Appalachians, according to date printing started (California books printed before 1870; Los Angeles books printed before 1900).

2. Books whose irreplaceability or uniqueness makes them rare.

a. Limited editions (300 copies or less).

b. Association and autographed copies, when by important or local authors.

c. First editions of significance.

3. Books of esthetic importance (fine printing, illustration, or binding).

4. Books which cost the library more than \$50, or which have a similar auction record.

5. Items of local or archival value or interest, including local fine press books.

6. Erotica, excluding sex hygiene, scientific works on sex, etc.

7. Other books subject to loss or damage.

a. Volumes or portfolios of fine or loose plates.

b. Books whose illustrations make them subject to mutilation.

c. Books of fragile physical make-up.

8. Special collections, i.e. unit acquisitions containing both rare and non-rare material, which need to be kept together.

9. Books with significant manuscript or other materials laid or tipped in.





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